

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 1885

THE DARWIN MEMORIAL

IT is not often that the unveiling of a statue is attended with an interest at all comparable with that which characterised this ceremony as performed last Tuesday in the Great Hall of the Natural History Museum. If the greatness of a man is to be estimated by the measure in which he has influenced the thoughts of men it is scarcely open to question that the greatest man of our century is Charles Darwin. As Prof. Huxley remarked in the course of his singularly judicious and well-balanced address, Mr. Darwin's work has not only reconstructed the science of biology, but has spread with an organising influence through almost every department of philosophical thought. Yet it was not merely the greatness of the naturalist which invested the proceedings in the Natural History Museum with an interest so unique. It was known to the whole assembly that the man whom they delighted to honour was one whose moral nature had been cast in the same lines of simple grandeur as those which belonged to his intellectual nature. It therefore only needed a passing allusion from Prof. Huxley to enable the whole assembly to reflect that it was due as much to massiveness of character as to massiveness of work that within three years of his death Mr. Darwin's name should constitute a new centre of gravity in every system of thought. And it was this reflection which gave to the ceremony so unusual a measure of interest. Around the statue were congregated the most representative men of every branch of culture, from the Prince of Wales and the Archbishop of Canterbury, to the opposite extremes of Radicalism and free-thought. Indeed, it is not too much to say that there can scarcely ever have been an occasion on which so many illustrious men of opposite ways of thinking have met to express a common agreement upon a man to whom they have felt that honour is due. The international memorial could not in any nation have found a more worthy site than the one in which it has been placed; but if anything could have added to the "solemn gladness" with which the personal friends of Mr. Darwin witnessed the presentation of this memorial, it must have been the evidence which the assembly yielded that among the innumerable differences of opinion which it represented, his memory must henceforth be always and universally regarded as a changeless monument of all that is greatest in human nature, as well as of all that is greatest in human achievement.

Concerning the statue itself, we have only to speak in terms of almost unqualified praise. It is, in the truest sense of the phrase, a noble work of art. The attitude is not only easy and dignified, but also natural and characteristic; the modelling of the head and face is unexceptionable; and the portrait is admirable. The only criticism we have to advance has reference to the hands, which not only do not bear the smallest resemblance to those of Mr. Darwin, but are of a kind which, had they been possessed by him, would have rendered impossible the accomplishment of much of his work. Although this

misrepresentation is a matter to be deplored, it is not one for which the artist can be justly held responsible. Never having had the advantage of seeing Mr. Darwin, Mr. Boehm has only to be congratulated upon the wonderful success which has attended his portraiture of the face and figure; the hands were no doubt supplied by guess-work, and therefore we have only to regret that the guess did not happen to have been more fortunate.

The following is the address made by Prof. Huxley, in the name of the Darwin Memorial Committee, on handing over the statue to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, as representative of the Trustees of the British Museum:—

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS,—It is now three years since the announcement of the death of our famous countryman, Charles Darwin, gave rise to a manifestation of public feeling, not only in these realms, but throughout the civilised world, which, if I mistake not, is without precedent in the modest annals of scientific biography.

The causes of this deep and wide outburst of emotion are not far to seek. We had lost one of those rare ministers and interpreters of Nature whose names mark epochs in the advance of natural knowledge. For, whatever be the ultimate verdict of posterity upon this or that opinion which Mr. Darwin has propounded; whatever adumbrations or anticipations of his doctrines may be found in the writings of his predecessors; the broad fact remains that since the publication, and by reason of the publication, of the "Origin of Species" the fundamental conceptions and the aims of the students of living Nature have been completely changed. From that work has sprung a great renewal, a true "instauratio magna" of the zoological and botanical sciences.

But the impulse thus given to scientific thought rapidly spread beyond the ordinarily recognised limits of biology. Psychology, Ethics, Cosmology were stirred to their foundations, and the "Origin of Species" proved itself to be the fixed point which the general doctrine of evolution needed in order to move the world. "Darwinism," in one form or another, sometimes strangely distorted and mutilated, became an everyday topic of men's speech, the object of an abundance both of vituperation and of praise, more often than of serious study.

It is curious now to remember how largely, at first, the objectors predominated; but, considering the usual fate of new views, it is still more curious to consider for how short a time the phase of vehement opposition lasted. Before twenty years had passed, not only had the importance of Mr. Darwin's work been fully recognised, but the world had discerned the simple, earnest, generous character of the man that shone through every page of his writings.

I imagine that reflections such as these swept through the minds alike of loving friends and of honourable antagonists when Mr. Darwin died; and that they were at one in the desire to honour the memory of the man who, without fear and without reproach, had successfully fought the hardest intellectual battle of these days.

It was in satisfaction of these just and generous impulses that our great naturalist's remains were deposited in Westminster Abbey; and that, immediately afterwards, a public meeting, presided over by my lamented predecessor Mr. Spottiswoode, was held in the rooms of the

Royal Society, for the purpose of considering what further steps should be taken towards the same end.

It was resolved to invite subscriptions, with the view of erecting a statue of Mr. Darwin in some suitable locality ; and to devote any surplus to the advancement of the biological sciences.

Contributions at once flowed in from Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States, and the British Colonies, no less than from all parts of the three kingdoms ; and they came from all classes of the community. To mention one interesting case, Sweden sent in 2296 subscriptions "from all sorts of people," as the distinguished man of science who transmitted them wrote, "from the bishop to the seamstress, and in sums from five pounds to two pence."

The Executive Committee has thus been enabled to carry out the objects proposed. A "Darwin Fund" has been created, which is to be held in trust by the Royal Society, and is to be employed in the promotion of biological research.

The execution of the statue was entrusted to Mr. Boehm ; and I think that those who had the good fortune to know Mr. Darwin personally will admire the power of artistic divination which has enabled the sculptor to place before us so very characteristic a likeness of one whom he had not seen.

It appeared to the Committee that, whether they regarded Mr. Darwin's career or the requirements of a work of art, no site could be so appropriate as this great hall, and they applied to the Trustees of the British Museum for permission to erect it in its present position.

That permission was most cordially granted, and I am desired to tender the best thanks of the Committee to the Trustees for their willingness to accede to our wishes.

I also beg leave to offer the expression of our gratitude to your Royal Highness for kindly consenting to represent the Trustees to-day.

It only remains for me, your Royal Highness, my Lords and Gentlemen, Trustees of the British Museum, in the name of the Darwin Memorial Committee, to request you to accept this statue of Charles Darwin.

We do not make this request for the mere sake of perpetuating a memory ; for so long as men occupy themselves with the pursuit of truth, the name of Darwin runs no more risk of oblivion than does that of Copernicus or that of Harvey.

Nor, most assuredly, do we ask you to preserve the statue in its cynosural position in this entrance-hall of our National Museum of Natural History as evidence that Mr. Darwin's views have received your official sanction ; for science does not recognise such sanctions, and commits suicide when it adopts a creed.

No ; we beg you to cherish this Memorial as a symbol by which, as generation after generation of students of Nature enter yonder door, they shall be reminded of the ideal according to which they must shape their lives, if they would turn to the best account the opportunities offered by the great institution under your charge.

The following reply was made by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales :—

PROF. HUXLEY AND GENTLEMEN,—I consider it to be a high privilege to have been deputed by the unanimous wish of my colleagues, the Trustees of the British Museum, to accept, in their name, the gift which you have offered us on behalf of the Committee of the Darwin Memorial. The Committee and subscribers may rest assured that we have most willingly assigned this honourable place to the statue of the great Englishman who has exerted so vast an influence upon the progress of those branches of natural knowledge the advancement of which is the object of the vast collections gathered here. It has given me much pleasure to learn that the memorial has received so much support in foreign countries that it may be regarded as cosmopolitan rather than as simply national ; while the fact that persons of every condition of life have contributed to it affords remarkable evidence of the popular interest in the discussion of scientific problems. A memorial to which all nations and all classes of society have contributed cannot be more fitly lodged than in our Museum, which, though national, is open to all the world, and the resources of which are at the disposal of every student of nature, whatever his condition or his country, who enters our doors.

CLAUS'S "ELEMENTARY TEXT-BOOK OF ZOOLOGY"

Elementary Text-Book of Zoology. Special Part : Mollusca to Man. By Dr. C. Claus. Translated and edited by Adam Sedgwick, M.A., Fellow and Lecturer of Trinity College, Cambridge, with the assistance of F. G. Heathcote, B.A., Trinity College, Cambridge. (London : W. Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1885.)

THE first 109 pages of this volume are devoted to the Mollusca and Tunicata, and the remarks offered in NATURE (vol. xxxi. p. 191) in criticism upon Vol. I. apply equally well here.

The information imparted is fully up to date, and the Tunicate section may be taken, on the whole, as a type of that well-balanced and succinct writing indispensable in a work of this order.

The unqualified statement on p. 9 that the mollusca are "*bilaterally symmetrical*" is unfortunate, and typical of a general insufficiency and sketchiness, evident throughout the entire work, in the diagnoses given of the great groups. No better instance of this can be quoted than those relating to the birds and mammals, where characters so vitally important as the modes of articulation of the jaw-apparatus upon the skull are omitted, and, although mentioned elsewhere, are inserted without that emphasis demanded of *primâ facie* characters applicable to both the living and extinct forms.

It is disappointing to find the invertebrate digestive-gland still spoken of as a "liver," no mention being made of the researches of Weber, Barfurth, and others, into its structure and functions. It is highly desirable in a book of this kind that any statements made concerning animals, such as are likely to fall into the hands of the average student, should be absolutely reliable. It cannot be said (p. 52) that the shell of Aplysia is "covered by two lobes of the foot," and the beginner would soon find that Limax and Arion are not the only common Gasteropods in which the pedal gland is present, while,